

Canberra
Amiga
Users
Society

Inc



NEWSLETTER
February 1992



Aims of the Society

Canberra Amiga Users Society Incorporated (CAUS) is an independent group (currently with about 300 members) formed for the benefit of people who own, use or are interested in the Commodore Amiga computer.

Benefits

Benefits include a bi-monthly newsletter, monthly meetings, discounts (see over page), bulletin board, Public Domain library, special interest groups and the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other users.

Subscriptions

Membership of the Society is available for an annual fee of \$20. This fee may be paid, with a filled-in application form, either to the Membership Secretary at any of the monthly meetings or by mail to the Membership Secretary, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Meetings

Meetings are held at 8 pm on the second Thursday of each month in either the Chifley Room or the auditorium at the Canberra Workers' Club in Childers St, Civic. The dates for the next few meetings are February 13, March 12, and April 9.

The Beginners' Group runs from 7-8 pm prior to each meeting.

Details of upcoming meetings and main topics will be advertised in the Canberra Times "Fridge Door" the week of the meeting.

Bulletin board

The CAUS bulletin board is online 24 hours and is maintained by our Sysop Peter McNeil and his team. To be a member of the bulletin board, you need to pay \$5.00 additional yearly subscription.

The telephone number of the bulletin board is 2551469 and of the Sysop 2545545 (h).

Newsletter Contributions

BECAUS is produced bi-monthly. Contributions to the newsletter can be submitted to the Editor via the newsletter area of the bulletin board, at the monthly meetings or to The Editor, PO Box 596, Canberra 2601.

Articles, reviews, comments and graphics are always welcome. Where possible, please provide them in Amiga readable format ie a disk file in ASCII, Wordperfect, Scribble!, Transcript or Amiga graphic format. The deadline for contributions to the newsletter is the 15th of the month preceding production. All contributions should be accompanied by the author's name and contact details. We reserve the right to refuse, disclaim, and/or edit contributions.

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Advertising

	First Run	Rerun
Full page	\$30	\$20
Half page	\$25	\$15
Quarter page	\$20	\$10

Copy is to be provided to the Editor either in Amiga graphic file format or as appropriately sized printed copy. First Run prices are applicable if the Editor has to format the advertisement.

Production

The Editor for the newsletter was Mark Trenery. The copy was formatted by the DTP SIG using Professional Page v2.1 and Professional Draw v2. Final copy was printed on a Postscript laser printer by Desktop Utilities.

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CAUS Committee (1992)

Director	Jeff Wilson
Vice Director	Simon Tow 2888362 (h) 6-8pm
Secretary	Tony Hayman 2961894 (h)
Membership Secretary	Berenice Jacobs 2552284 (h) 4-8pm
Treasurer	Terry Sullivan 2548950 (h)
Committee	Chris Townley 2545922 (h) 6-8pm David Jacobs 2552284 (h) 5-7pm Loy Winkler 2486545 (h) 4-10pm Andrew Boundy 2916971 (h) 7-10pm Gordon Owtram 2972692 (h) 6-8pm Mark Trenery 2861358 (h) 7-10pm

Special Interest Groups

Each of the following members is coordinating a Special Interest Group (SIG) in the listed topic. If you are interested in joining one of these groups and getting more out of your Amiga, either contact them direct or indicate your interest at the next monthly meeting:

Loy Winkler	2486545	Genealogy
David Wilson	2918324	Desktop Publishing
Rob Vander Meer	2417113	Video
Christopher Cole	2478590	Hardware
Bernie Wiemers Jr.	2489837	Amos
Mathew Taylor	2415343	Music & Graphics
Andrew Boundy	2916971	Can Do

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This Month's Cover

Farewell to Jeff Wilson, we hope he enjoys his boat trip. Yes, the picture looks better from a distance!

Director's Letter

Well I guess this should be called the Ex-Director's Letter as this will be my last letter for this Newsletter as Director of the CAUSE group. It is with much sorrow on my part that I have to leave the group but the fun part of my job is over for now and so I must return to Sea to ride the ocean waves once more.

I would like to start off by thanking everyone in the group that I've come into contact with. Everyone has helped my learning, whether by direct or indirect means you have all added to the fun that I derive from my computer.

There are people in this group with immense talents who've strived to help the group, and probably the one which I should mention first is Simon Tow who has continually held this group together during the periods when others had given up and has supported me during my time as director and secretary of CAUSE. I just hope that frustrations don't get the better of him as happened to others before him and he continues to help the group in the ways that are too numerous to mention.

Other Members that have made my time with the group easy and enjoyable are John Buttle, David Wilson (not a relative, although I could do worse), Peter McNeil, Trevor Raddaz, Terry Sullivan, Tony Hayman, Miles and Piers Goodhew and Peter Keim. There are countless others but I shan't go on as this would just turn into a membership list.

We were lucky enough to have two great guest speakers at the end of last year and I hope we will see them again this year (I know that I will, but I'm speaking on behalf of the group). Chris Dunbar did an exceptional job with the CDTV demonstration by even stunning people who had stated that they knew all about it, (but I won't mention Simons name and embarrass him in these pages). The speaker in October was Gary Raynor of ColorBurst fame. My first impressions of Gary was "WOW, he's young", but he was not only talented but also a great speaker keeping people hounding him long after he had finished and I'm sure people will be waiting for the release of his OpalVision products. My personal thanks to both these people who give up their time to keep User Groups such as Ours Alive.

I know that it is a little time since Christmas but what did you get in your stocking. I must of been a good boy as Santa bought me what I had asked for in the way of the perfect copier. It would seem that at last I've found a copier worthy of the name. To make things even better, it is Australian made so I've done my bit for the economy by owning a copier. The copier that I speak of is PowerCopy II available from PCM Computers in Victoria. It is a Hardware/Software combination which would appear to be the normal these days with the majority of the copiers. I've managed to back up all the christmas games of the kids as well as other games that I've not been previously able to backup. This package is available for \$80 and worth its weight in gold as each game it saves is worth nearly that much, like Jimmy Whites Snooker and Lemmings. For

new members who are reading this and thinking that this sounds like piracy, rest easy as this is only for making a backup copy of an original before letting the kids loose with them. Personally, I don't think it's fair of the Software companies encoding their disks anyway as it only keeps the honest folks from making a copy as all the titles are available in a cracked format from various sources anyway and its us honest ones that have our originals destroyed and have to suffer the inconvenience of writing for a backup copy or throwing the disk into the bin instead. Anyway like I said, this little outlay will save all this worry.

Speaking of lemmings, not that we were at the time but it's the only lead in that I have for them. I've become one of the followers that worry about every little fellow and his welfare. If you've not

tried this game
then I suggest that
you do soon as it's
easy to see why it
won the title of
"ARCADE GAME
of 1991" after a

few minutes playing time. There is now a data disk available for it which will give you another 120 levels in case you finished the first lot. Give it a go as it's lots of fun.



off. Give Lemmings a go John!

Remember that this group is run by volunteers and as such is always in search of new ones to help with the workload. You could be one of these people with very little effort on your part and you would have the added advantage of meeting many nice and helpful people. Stick up your hand at the elections which is due soon and become one of the doers and not one of the expecters.

Well, as I promised to keep this ramble short and to the point, I should sign off now and let you get on with the rest of this great magazine.

I will be logging onto the Desktop Utilities BBS from time to time, so say hello if you see me there.

For John and other members who have been waiting for copies of Shanghai II, I'm afraid the news is not real good, I finally found someone in the distributors who sort of knew what she was talking about and she let me know that if it was to be released it would be a long time

HINTS FOR BEGINNERS

(From one beginner to another)

Leigh Murray

Things to do:

1. ATTEND CAUSE MEETINGS AND LEARN WITH FRIENDS

Attend the Beginners Sessions run by CAUSE before the monthly meetings; they can be very helpful. And perhaps you could chum up with another person there who's in the same boat, and learn together, using each other's computers. Learning should be quicker, less frustrating and more fun (and you won't feel quite such a fool when you need to call for help, if two of you have failed to figure out something).

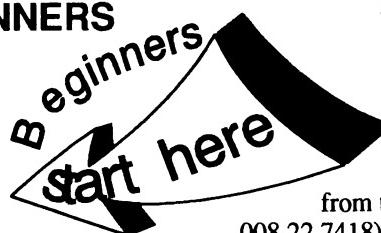
2. ASK QUESTIONS

It is good to try to learn by discovering how to do things yourself; it can be very satisfying when you finally work something out. But if you can't figure it out within a fairly short time, don't just give up or go bonkers with frustration, ASK SOMEONE WHO KNOWS.

Suitable people to ask include experienced Amiga-users at CAUSE meetings, or the person listed in the CAUSE magazine for beginners help.

3. READ MAGAZINES

Read Amiga magazines, such as Australian Commodore and Amiga Review, Amiga Shopper (which has helpful explanatory paragraphs for beginners plus excellent reviews of products) or Megadisc (see below).



4. READ MEGADISC

Buy a Megadisc (you can get them at CAUSE meetings or directly from the publisher - phone 008 22 7418) and consider

subscribing. This magazine-on-a-disc is easy to use (just point and click with your mouse) and full of all sorts of hints and tips (some for beginners, some quite advanced). And they have PD disks especially suitable for beginners.

5. USE YOUR AMIGA PRODUCTIVELY

Play a few games - they'll help you gain some familiarity with your new computer - but also try wordprocessing, spreadsheet or database work, or perhaps try your hand at computer art or music. You will get a lot more fun out of your Amiga if you use it mainly for productive, creative or educational tasks, and only occasionally for games.

Games, although great fun, can be addictive time-wasters. Use your Amiga to write letters or reports, keep track of your finances, keep records (addresses, birthdays, house contents for insurance purposes, recipes, VCR tapes, CDs), create pictures or greeting cards, learn to type or play the piano, or learn a computer programming language and write your own special-purpose programs.

Once you have some familiarity with your machine and can handle windows, icons and file requesters with ease, then suitable programs to get you started can be obtained very cheaply from the Public Domain (PD) libraries. But select carefully and try to get advice first, or

read reviews, to ensure that you start off with a good product (not all are). For instance, in the Public Domain, TextPlus and QED are well-regarded as text processors. A version of TextPlus is on CAUSE Beginner's Disk 1, and QED can be obtained for a disk and a dollar or two from the PD library held by Berenice Jacobs of CAUSE (it's on the AMIGAN 23 disk) or from the Megadisc PD library for \$3.50 (or \$2.50 for subscribers) - they have a very prompt mail-order service and a toll-free phone number 008 22 7418 for orders.

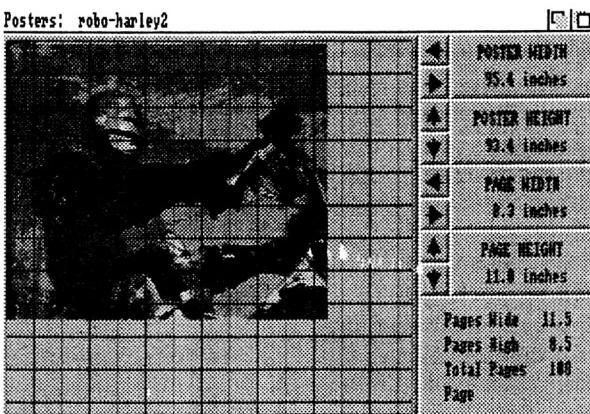
For the absolute beginner with the Amiga (I was one myself a year ago), I recommend the purchase of at least one item of commercial productivity software, such as a word processor or a database.

Generally speaking, commercial software is more user-friendly and has much better documentation than does PD software - and that makes it much easier for a beginner to get up and running virtually straight away with minimal frustration. You'll learn about your Amiga almost as a side effect of using the package. And once you can understand and use one of these commercial products, you'll be in a much stronger position for exploring the world of Public Domain software.

Commercial products I've found easy to

use include Deluxe Photolab for art, [See page 21 this issue for a review - Ed], and ProWrite for word-processing. An alternative to PhotoLab for just "painting" might be Deluxe Paint, the BIG seller of the art world. Or you might enjoy a new product, Pelican Press, designed specifically for the production of greeting cards, calendars or invitations; it comes with a lot of ready-made pictures called clip art to make life easier for you. (There is also plenty of clip art available from the PD libraries for use in paint packages, if

you'd like to try computer art but can't draw well.)



Setting printout dimensions in Posters, part of the Deluxe Photolab package from Electronic Arts.

For word processing, QuickWrite, put out by the same people as ProWrite at about half the price, should be equally easy to use and quite adequate if you don't wish to

include pictures in your documents; an alternative might be the well-regarded TransWrite. And if you DO wish to include pictures, particularly colour pictures, then Pen Pal should be your choice - ProWrite handles some pictures well, but it does some truly dreadful things to many others; you could also consider the very expensive WordWorth. KindWords is best avoided, and excellence! handles pictures, but not well.

Another good early choice might be HyperBook, a new product that I've just

looked at from a demo disk (obtainable from Megadisc, number DE101, if you wish to try before you buy). Its makers describe it as a free-form personal information manager - it's a sort of fancy database tool. It seems very easy (and fun) to use, and with it you should be able to set up all sorts of beautifully-presented and professional-looking files; its makers suggest such applications as address books, diaries, filing systems, storybooks, scrapbooks etc etc. On a quick evaluation, I think it should be suitable for a beginner.

Other well-regarded commercial products are Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing; Distant Suns, an astronomy package for star-gazers; My Paint, a painting program for kids; and the Miracle Piano Teaching System, a new product that has had rave reviews. All of these should be suitable for beginners and fun to use, although they will probably not teach you as much about using the Amiga as would a word processor, database or art package.

WARNING: when buying commercial software, check first that you have enough memory to run the program - many commercial programs need 1MB RAM to run at all, and most will perform better with this.

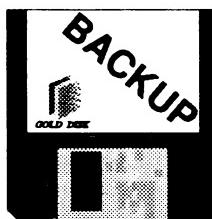
6. EXTRA HARDWARE

The Amiga is a powerful computer, but its power can't be fully utilised on a basic Amiga 500 system without at least 1MB memory, an extra disk drive, a printer and a monitor. So add on more equipment as soon as you can afford to. Buy a PRINTER as soon as you can - you'll find it is an essential if you are to use your computer truly productively. The screen resolution of a MONITOR is

much higher than that of a TV, so it's a lot easier to read and well worth buying; be kind to your eyes and get one. And if you are planning to buy an extra DISK DRIVE, then consider getting a hard drive instead of another floppy - using one is BLISS - but check first whether the fan noise of your chosen drive is going to drive you nuts (some are very noisy).

7. BACKUPS

Buy some blank disks, and make backup copies of ALL your disks (although some commercial software is copy-protected and can't be backed up with normal diskcopy functions; the documentation with the program should warn you if this is the case). Look under 'duplicating disks' in your Amiga manual for instructions; if you still need help, ASK someone appropriate.



Use the backup copies of programs for everyday use - keep the original disks tucked away safely somewhere out of the way. Do NOT store near strong magnetic sources (such as speakers) which can erase your data.

Backup important data to another disk as soon as it is created - you never know when a disk might get read/write errors and become unreadable (to do this backup, simply save your file to a second disk).

For important data, such as that art masterpiece you've just created, consider leaving a backup copy "offsite" - that is, at another place, such as a friend's house (and make sure the friend knows it's important to store the disk in a suitable clean, dry place free of magnetic fields). Then should you have a fire or be burgled, the data won't be

lost forever.

If you don't need to write on a disk, keep it write-protected with the tab on the disk. This will prevent accidental overwriting and/or virus infection of that disk.

8. VIRUSES

Obtain a good virus-checking program, install it on your machine and check EVERY disk. This is VERY IMPORTANT so if you don't know what to do, ASK someone who does.

Suggested virus-checkers are ZeroVirus (on CAUSE Beginner's Disks 1 and 2), KDV and NoVirus (both obtainable via Megadisc), and VirusX (a bit old hat now, but a start, and readily available in the Public Domain).

Because viruses can only "infect" disks to which they can write, you can protect many of your disks from infection by leaving the tab on the disk in the write-protect position permanently. From this point of view, it is best to organize your disks so that you have separate data disks where you save all your letters, artwork, databases etc; only these disks need to be write-enabled.

As a first step before installing virus-checking (but don't delay long), you can further protect against a virus infection spreading itself throughout your system by doing a "cold start" between (ie, before and after) using each new game or software package. To do a "cold start", simply turn your Amiga off at the power supply, wait a minute and turn it on again - this clears everything out of memory, including any viruses lurking there. A "warm start", in which you simply reboot without turning off the power (Ctrl/Amiga/Amiga), does not

clear memory, and will leave any viruses intact. In the long-term it would be better not to keep turning your machine on and off like a yo-yo (it's kinder to the equipment), and this is a slow and ineffective way of using the wondrous power of the multi-tasking Amiga. So install virus-checking (and, preferably, a memory clearer), and simply do a cold start once daily or weekly.

WARNING: if a virus-checker detects an unknown boot block on a disk, this may not mean the disk is infected with a virus. The boot block may simply be a non-standard boot block; this occurs quite commonly with games. Do NOT give the virus-checker permission to overwrite this boot block (it will always ask politely first) unless you are SURE it is a virus, or you may render the disk unusable. If in doubt, ask someone experienced.

9. GET TO KNOW YOUR COMPUTER

To become familiar with the way the Amiga works, try out some housekeeping tasks which will give you a feel for how the machine functions, and the structure of files. Understanding the file structures is extremely important, as without this understanding you won't be able to save and reload files and, therefore, you'll be unable to do much productive work.

The safest way to learn is to make an extra backup copy of a disk and play with that; this way you can't do any permanent damage by deleting files. Read your manual and then try some of the following suggestions:

cont' on page 22

Desktop Publishing News & Views

by Frank Keighley

Using Contact Personal Database Manager: Questions and answers

Question: I want to sort individual records in various ways. I want some sorted by surname, other under the company name (so that all my contacts at a company appear in the file in sequence), and a few under a comment such as "Plumber" (so I can see my plumber contacts at one time in the list window). Can Contact do this?

Answer: Yes. Contact recognizes a "sort marker" which you can put in front of whatever is to be used in sorting that record. It doesn't matter which line it is on, or where it is in the line. By default, it sorts on the start of the first line, and uses the symbol "@" to sort on - but you can even define your own sort marker if you wish.

Question: Does it matter where in the records I put a key that I want to search for?

Answer: No. Contact is a free-form database.

Question: How can I select a group of records in a data file, based on some criteria, without the selection criteria being included in the printout?

Answer: Contact has a symbol to indicate non-printing comments: "!". Placing this before something means it can be used for sorting or selection without appearing in the printout. See the section "Comments".

Question: What is the best way to create

a database so that it can take advantage of the Find function, the Selection menu and the ARexx scripts?

Answer: It is a good idea to standardize the terms you use, if you know you will be searching for them later; that way, you know you will definitely find all relevant records when you search using the Find gadget or the Selection menu.

Question: When doing a "Find", do I have to type in the whole expression I am looking for?

Answer: No. You only need to type in enough to distinguish what you are looking for from other things in the database. Just the end of one well-chosen word and the start of the next can be enough to find the right record. If I am searching for "Professional Amiga User", I may type in "al am" as the string, because it is the first instance that will match that criterion. I would not type "ga us" because "Amiga User" occurs in many other records in the same data file. See "Viewing Records" and "Selecting Records".

Question: Can I directly access Contact from an application such as a word processor?

Answer: Yes, by using the hotkey - and you can send data directly from the active record to your word processing document, using Contact's Type button.

Question: What protection does Contact have against loss of new changes in a power blackout or if I forget to save before switching off?

Answer: Autosave. Contact defaults to an autosave time interval of five minutes. You can also adjust this, or turn Autosave off - but we suggest you leave it on!

Desktop Utilities

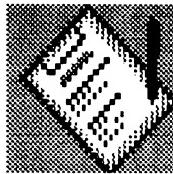
PO Box 3053, Manuka, ACT 2603
Phone: Canberra (06) 239 6658
BBS: 239 6659 Fax: 239 6619

*Amiga
graphics
output to
film*

*Slides or
prints via
digital film
recorder*

*2000 line
resolution*

*IFF
Digiview
GIF
TIFF
PCX
BMP
JPEG
MacPaint
.etc*



Version 2.0
about to be
released!

Contact 2.0

Personal database manager can do all this & more:

Store names, addresses, phone numbers,
inventories, CD catalogues & more
Include non-printing comments
Find, select, sort records
Print labels in up to four columns
Dial the phone
Send entry to current WP or DTP doc
Call ARexx scripts
Give you instant hotkey access

AMIGA BUREAU SERVICES

SOFTWARE DISTRIBUTION

SCANNING SERVICE

LASER & COLOUR INKJET PRINTING

COLOUR SLIDES FROM COMPUTER GRAPHICS

FILE CONVERSION

BEGINNERS & DTP TRAINING

SHARP SCANNERS & COLOUR INKJET

Object-based programming from
Inovatronics: point and click



Our tech support registration
includes one year's
membership of the DTU
CanDo User Group
membership. First
newsletter already out;
second one coming soon;

Can you do without it?



The Annual General Meeting of the Canberra Amiga Users' Society will be held on 9 April 1992 in the auditorium of the Canberra Workers' Club, Childers St, Civic commencing at 8pm.

The election for the incoming Committee will be held. All positions fall vacant -

Director	Vice-Director
Secretary	Treasurer
Membership Secretary	Committee members (5 or 6)
Newsletter Editor	

Nature of business

1. Minutes of the last AGM
 2. Receive from the committee a report of the last ordinary meeting
 3. Receive nominations from financial members; nominations close at 8 pm.
 4. The Financial Statement will be read.
- Proxy voting form are available from the Secretary and are to be returned to the Secretary by 8:30 pm on 8 April.

NOMINATION FORM

I,.....

being a financial member of CAUS hereby nominate

.....

for the position of

.....

Signature..... Date.....

I,.....

being a financial member of CAUS second the above nomination

Signature..... Date.....

I,.....

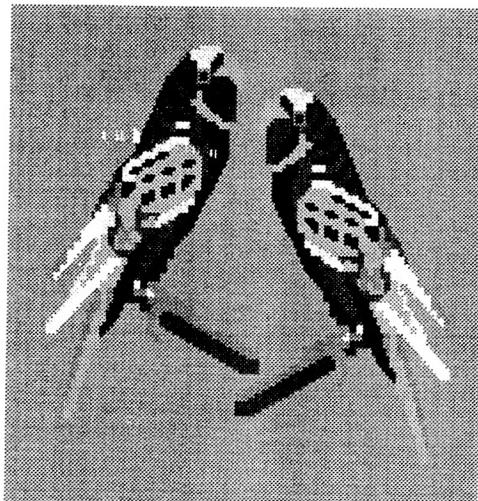
being a financial member of CAUS accept the above nomination.

Signature..... Date.....



The pictures on this page and the cover were created by Hugh Webster using a variety of techniques.

'Bird', 'Sailing', and 'Aquarium' were derived from the Ministek picture range, plotted on a one-to-one basis from a Ministek diagram.



Reviews, Remarks and Ravings.

By Mathew Taylor

Having produced a few little (and one big) snippets of text here and there over the last few months, I have decided to compile them into my own little column. All feedback is greatly appreciated, and also is a great source of inspiration for future articles.

Just a little reply to Warren's article on the Canon BJ-330. I got to play with a BJ-10e at work the other weekend. If you still need convincing then I'm here to tell you that they are

WONDERFUL. The BJ-10e is not a mega-chunky,

stick-paper-in-every-side type of printer, but for the general home use it's hard to beat. Some said to me that the big drawback with this type of printer is that they smudge, but I was quick to demonstrate that you need to drool all over the page first, as the ordinary finger isn't wet enough to facilitate the smudge.

Memory expansion on an A500.

There must be hundreds of Amiga owners out there just like me, who could only afford an Amiga 500. Also like myself, these people cannot at this time afford a hard drive. So we can't pile memory into our Amiga via that medium. There is, of course, another way.

And so it was that I heard of the AX-RAM board for the A500. I happened to be going on holidays the next week, and the place selling these boards just happened to be an hour and a half's drive from where I was staying. Off I went to Bendigo.

When I got there, I was greeted with a fool, who said "Our Amiga person is out of town today, I'll see what I can do." What a let down. The guy managed to get the board for me, and also managed to sell it to me, after spending about ten minutes finding it, and then ten minutes finding it unpopulated (Without memory chips, for those new computer users). Home I went with my new board.

So why the AX-RAM? It was, and still is, the only true two meg board that I had heard of at a reasonable price. In Canberra I had been quoted prices such as \$350 for 1.8 meg boards. The AX-RAM board will end up costing me \$280 when it is fully populated. Also for those new computer users, a true two meg board

CAUS Public Domain Collection

The PD programs in the collection vary from very impressive business, graphics and sound programs through to demonstrations of the Amiga's capabilities, games and utilities.

The following people are PD librarians:

Simon Tow	Fisher	2888 362 (h)
Lawrence CoombsAranda		2515 523 (h)
Berenice Jacobs	Scullin	2552 284 (h)

You have the choice of buying the disks or swapping them for some unused acceptable NAME brand disk that you own. The copying fee for each disk (except for the FISH catalogue disk) is \$1 to cover the librarian's costs.

For those who want other than the Fish collection, Berenice Jacobs holds a large collection of alternate public domain. Contact Berenice for more details.

actually has two megs on it. Sound stupid? Well, some people seem to think that boards with only 1.75 meg on them are two meg boards, and so people have asked me, "Is it a true two meg board." The reason for the 1.75 meg boards I surmise is that kickstart 1.3 only recognises that much fast ram.

Then to the chips. I rang around a few places, and found out a number of things. Unless you have great knowledge of the bits that make up a computer, and the part numbers that correspond to them, some stores will give you a headache. The cheapest chips were to be found at Computech (Now here we go, somebody will ring me tonight and say they know of cheaper ones, right?). There they were \$8.95 each. They don't sell Amiga's either, but maybe they'll catch on soon. It is good to see the eyebrows of an IBM bred man when you hand him an AX-RAM board and say, "The chips are for this, actually.", and he replies with "What's this for?"

Really, I must say that IBM retailers are egotistical about IBM's. One place said "What are the chips for, a VGA card?" Assumptions, Assumptions. Anyway, we're getting a bit off the track here. I bought a meg of chippies, which the nice man stuck in for me.

At this stage I was beginning to wonder whether or not the board was worth the trouble. I had purchased a set of allen keys to open the fancy torx screws that adorned the underside of my amiga, but one of the screws was either defective or 'home computer enthusiast proof'. It managed to mangle my allen keys so they wouldn't open the screws.

All was not lost, however, as a friend of mine had a very nice set of keys, which

he brought over, and we opened up the case. BUT, there was still the one defective screw, which was in the corner (luckily), so I gave my favourite phrase a go, "Stuff it", and simply turned the case on the screw so it was out of my way.

Now I had to get the gary chip out. No soldering needed there, so it should be easy. Wrong again! There isn't a lot of room to work with for novice chip removers like myself, with little blue things and brown things sticking up all over the place. I managed to gingerly pull it out, and hastily put it into the GR-1 board that replaces it on the mother board. Ooops. I had accidentally put it in the wrong way round. After putting it the right way round, which was much easier than getting it from the mother board, I put the GR-1 board in.

The AX-RAM board slotted in with a minimum of fuss, although the manufacturer could have made it about five milimetres wider, to facilitate a simple stick it in and push sideways installation. The width that it is means you actually have to align the thing (The less work the better, I say!). I soon had all my favourite memory guages running, and was quite pleased with my 1.5 meg. Now for the technical details.

The Manual: AX-RAM comes with an eleven page manual, which supposedly tells you how to install the thing. In fact, it took eleven read through's before I began to get the gist of what it wanted me to do. It isn't impossible to wrap your mind about it, but it could be better.

Installation: The GR-1 board is the only necessary bit of the apparatus, and is not that difficult to install. The AX-RAM board just slots in, and so is

easy as pie. The only problem for some will come when they wish to configure the board to 1 meg of chip ram, which requires the soldering of a wire from the GR-1 (No soldering this end) to JP2 on the mother board. For someone with a soldering iron, this too would be easy.

Options: You can buy the board two ways. One way is to buy the full kit, with 0.5 to 2 meg of ram on it. This comes with everything you need (except a technician) to upgrade to 2 meg. Alternatively, you can buy a starter kit, with only the AX-RAM board and half a meg. This slots straight in without anything else (Just like the A501). Then later you have the option of buying the upgrade kit with the GR-1 board, and adapting your system to handle more memory.

Configurations: The board has four memory configurations. 1) 1.75 meg of exec configured ram with .25 addmem. addmem needs a little program to add it to the system. This configuration needs no soldering. 2) 2 meg of addmem. This has the advantage of providing a continuous block of memory. This also does not require soldering. 3) 0.5 meg of chip ram and up to 1.5 meg of fast ram. This is the most powerful configuration, but requires the soldering to JP2. 4) 0.5 meg of chip ram and up to 1.5 meg of addmem ram. This does not require the soldering to JP2.

The board requires the fatter agnus chip to work properly, which is part number 8372. I thought I could find out if I had this chip already by reading the manual. The page for that chip is headed: Fat Agnus (part 8371), and on the chip diagram is printed 8370. I guess the phrase, "Commodore in its wisdom" comes to mind with things like this, but

it is a minor technicality.

If you would like to find out more about this product or the company that makes it, you could write to:

SE Watts Electronics

5 Dorchap Crt

Hoppers Crossing VIC 3029

PH or Fax?: (03) 749 3231

More Tutorial Disks.

Just a small note about the tutorial disk. For those new Amigans, it is a great little disk packed full of useful info. It comes with heaps of little cli utilities, and docs on how to use them. Version 3.2 is out now, with 3.3 hot on its heels.

This disk has become somewhat of a hobby of mine now, and I desperately want more things to cram onto it. What I really need is questions. If you are new to the Amiga, or just haven't gathered all the information possible, I would appreciate a call, so that I can answer those questions on my disk, as well as to you on the phone. So call me on 2415343.

Music and Graphics Sig.

I have volunteered to be the coordinator of this sig. I think it will be a good sig to get running, so that people with artistic talent can get together and produce stuff for the programmers in our group, and hence some great software can be churned out by Cause. If all those people who are interested in coming along to the first meeting of the sig could ring me, I can organise a date for it. In case she tries to get out of it, Ellen Levingston is invited to come, so there's no excuse!



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FLICKER FREE VIDEO

Warren G.Price

The Amiga as we know is not only a great machine it is very versatile and pops up in some interesting and surprising places. However the standard workbench screen has been a drawback for some applications as it lacks the resolution needed for high quality use in DTP or CAD.

While this deficiency can be minimized by using the high resolution interlace mode, one problem is exchanged for another - the dreaded interlace flicker. This flicker occurs when the Amiga doubles the number of horizontal display lines in a successful endeavour to increase resolution.

A number of years ago Microway Tech produced a video board that went a long way to solving this problem for A2000 users (to put it simply) by taking alternate scan line signals and combining them into a single 31.5Khz output that is twice the frequency (and resolution) of a standard Amiga display. This solution was fine for those fortunate enough to be A2000 users but didn't do anything for other mere Amiga mortals. Besides that, as things developed on the software front the Microway unit didn't handle the overscan modes that have become a frequent feature.

Until recently there was no hardware flicker solution for the A500. However there has been of recent times a growing number of A500 users who are interested in using their machines for either high end or semi-professional applications, who find the interlace flicker both painful and frustrating.

Enter the Flicker Free Video board produced by ICD of Rockford, Illinois. I became aware of the unit recently and decided to check it out. After numerous phone calls hither and yon the board finally arrived in its own well protected box from Max Drive Systems Toowomba. A brief look at the 12 page manual revealed it was relatively straight forward to install. I have heard that before you say - time did tell - so read on. The multi layer board is only 90mm x 80mm and is covered with mostly surface mounted components - very neat indeed. It seemed amazing that so much power could fit on such a low chip count board.

I must add at this point that the manual was adequate and outlined the few tools needed, a discussion of interlace flicker and how this device works in the Amiga. I commend ICD for mentioning that installation would void the warranty and does require some technical skill.

While this advice is certainly good and necessary, common sense and careful attention to detail should allow the average user to implement the manuals instructions. However "if in doubt leave it out" is probably a good watch word Amigo! Just ask your friendly "techno head" to do it for you.

The actual installation is as they claim, a breeze and doesn't require soldering or any other funny doo-dahs. I won't bore you with the details of opening the Ami etc but suffice it to say that this step is indeed the hardest part of the whole operation. Next I located the 48 pin Denise chip and after taking notice of its orientation I carefully prised her majesty out and piggy-backed her on the FFV board as instructed.

So far so good. Seemed almost too easy,

although I must confess I had to hold my tongue just right as I pushed the FFV daughter board pin extensions into the original Denise socket - user beware on this one. The kit gave the option of a long or short flat cable terminating in a D9 connector. This gives the user some appreciated flexibility in finding a permanent mounting spot for the connection to the outside world. Good one ICD.

After carefully closing Ami I was keen to get to the real purpose of the exercise - the display. I wasn't disappointed! After switch on there it was on my multi-sync. monitor - rock solid, clear and crisp. I started throwing all sorts of software at the machine. It quickly became obvious that ICD's claim of compatibility with all software and all Amiga screen resolutions is true, no kidding.

With the Art Department and Deluxe Paint III V3.25 I was able to try full PAL overscan 768 x 576 didn't faze the unit or give any sign of trouble. Obviously the 3 megabits of on board RAM allow the Flicker Free Video to do its thing with ease and flourish without even scan lines being visible. I have no reason to doubt that it will live up to the manufacturers claim to be compatible with overscan screens as large as the Amiga can produce.

A big advantage of this unit for A2000/6802/30 users and the like is not only is it compatible with both internal and external genlocks but it obviously leaves the only internal video slot free for whatever. Again, good one ICD!

I have been using this unit now for 2 weeks and there has never been any reason to doubt its reliability. It certainly gives a rocksolid, crisp display. In regular workbench mode however it does make

text slightly more chunky but the absence of scan lines more than makes up for this.

The only real drawback to this unit that I can see is the need for an expensive multi-sync monitor. I may add that on my Everex EverSync 300 the display has a 1cm vertical border either side that is a little disappointing - this is a limitation of the monitor rather than the ICD unit itself. A trial with the Commodore 1950 monitor gave a full edge to edge screen display.

A-max users will be interested to know that the Flicker Free Video unit gives a totally steady display. Furthermore, a quick trial with Colorburst (now that is a real mean machine) attached also revealed that these two units will co-exist very happily.

In summary I have been most impressed with this unit and have found that it lives up to the manufactures claims. This unit certainly has something for everybody - 1. Display is extra good. 2. Installation is a breeze. 3. Supports highest Amiga overscan. 4. Total software compatibility. 5. Leaves the 2000 video slot free. 6. No other deinterlacer is available for the A500.

This is without a doubt a very well thought out display enhancer for all Amigas bar the 3000, which of course has its own deinterlacer. If you are serious about ridding Ami of the dreaded interlace jitters this unit is worthy very serious consideration.

Overall I rate this unit 9 out of 10. Well done ICD and Max Drive! The local price for the FFV board is \$649.

The unit was generously supplied by the Australian distributor- Max Drive Systems P.O.Box 56 Darling Heights QLD 4350 008 076 301.

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DELUXE PHOTOLAB

Review

by Leigh Murray

PhotoLab is a GREAT (and usually much underrated) package, available now at bargain prices. When first released in Australia some years ago, it was priced much higher than its famous stablemate DeluxePaint II, because there is so much more to it. PhotoLab contains not only a fully-featured Paint program similar to (though not quite the same as) DeluxePaint but also Colors, an image-processor, and Posters, a printing program. All the programs are easy to use, and they don't have a long learning curve - even for one with no previous computer-art experience and precious little Amiga expertise.

Documentation is excellent: comprehensive and easy to understand, with excellent tutorials and good indexing. It is well set-out in a spiral-bound book. PhotoLab requires 1MB RAM to run, and functions quite well with this, although if you want to do a lot of work in the Hi-Res Interlaced format, then you will need 1MB chip RAM rather than the standard 512K. I'll describe, briefly, what each section of PhotoLab does.

PAINt deals with all standard modes of painting (Lo-Res, Hi-Res, HAM and Extra Half-Brite, Interlaced or Non-Interlaced). The latest incarnation of DeluxePaint, called DeluxePaint IV, allows HAM painting (finally!), but the earlier versions of this program didn't, and a HAM facility is needed if you wish to create delicate shading effects or touch up digitised pictures (and, remember, you can get your favourite

pictures digitised at CAUSE meetings). PhotoLab Paint does lack animation and stencil capabilities, functions I've not needed at all - not yet, anyway. So far, these are the only possible drawbacks I've noticed with this package.

COLORS lets you resize pictures (to an exact pixel size), change the graphics mode (from, say, Hi-Res Interlaced to Lo-Res or HAM Non-Interlaced), and manipulate the colours (including converting from colour to black and white). If you don't know the resolution of a picture, then just load it into Colors - the program will select the correct graphics mode, and the details can be displayed. With only half a megabyte of chip RAM on my A500, usually I can't do much in Paint with the Hi-Res Interlaced format used for much of the clip-art available and, anyway, without a Flicker Fixer, the Interlaced formats are just plain fiendish and definitely migraine-inducing. So I find Colors particularly useful for converting the clip-art first to Lo-Res Non-Interlaced, a format which is quite adequate for small pictures that are to be included in letters or cards. Colors does an excellent conversion and displays the converted picture almost immediately. Sometimes resizing first with Colors will allow a better conversion. Basically, it is simple to manipulate a picture with Colors until a suitable result is obtained. This program performs the same sorts of tasks (although probably at a more elementary level) as The Art Department and Butcher.

POSTERS gives excellent control over printed size (within a tenth of an inch horizontally or vertically), making it easy to produce prints of any size from that of a stamp to huge posters (up to 10 feet by 10 feet - in sections, naturally).

Help Service

The following is a list of members who have volunteered to share their knowledge and experience with other members. If you have a problem or just need a bit of advice in any of the areas listed, please ring during the hours shown.

Paul Martin	10-10 M-Su	2532121	what's happening
Simon Tow	6-7 pm M-F	2888362	hard disks, Digiview
Gary Duncan	6-8 pm M-F	2319801	general C programming
Frank Keighley	6-7 pm M-F	2396658	laser printing, desktop publishing
Peter McNeil	6-8 pm M-F	2545545	bulletin board
Doug Stone	6-9 pm M-Su	2516347	general help
James Dempsey	7-9 pm M-Su	2922145	Modula 2
Robert Vander Meer	6-8 pm M-F	2417113	desktop video
Wayne Rochester	6-10 pm M-F	2479093	assembler, general programming
Michael Thong	6-8 pm M-Su	2822323	hardware interfaces
Colin Vance	6-8 pm M-Su	2511087	beginners AmigaDOS
Andrew Boundy	8-10pmM-Th	2916971	Superbase Wordperfect

Posters is a useful program, and I use it to print greeting cards of varying sizes. A preview function displays a rough approximation of how the printed output will appear, and helps avoid printing goofs.

A bonus, a BIG bonus, of DeluxePhotoLab is the icons it creates for each picture saved. These picture icons show a small image of the actual picture, and display the size in pixels, so it's very easy to see at a glance what each picture looks like and how big it is (and whether you've saved the wrong section!), just by displaying the contents of a window. This is a great feature, one I make use of a lot.

So, the point is that DeluxePhotoLab is now a wondrous bargain at the going rate of \$99, sometimes less. I strongly recommend it.

cont' from page 9.

- . INITIALISE a disk and RENAME it. Perhaps you could create a disk called LETTERS01 or ART01 to contain your letters or artwork.
- . Change window sizes, drag windows, open many windows at once and then swap between them - your Amiga manual will tell you how to do these things. . Create drawers (either by DUPLICATE, or by dragging the Empty drawer from your Workbench disk into the new window and then RENAMEing it), perhaps on the disk you've just formatted. You could, for instance, create drawers labelled with the names of relatives or friends to hold the letters for each of those people (eg, drawers labelled Mum, Peter etc).
- . Investigate the SNAPSHOT and CLEANUP commands - they are very handy for tidying up a mess of icons in a

window, or for fixing the shape of a window or its location on the screen; also try these with the shift key held down while selecting multiple icons.

- . Be very wary of the DISCARD command.
- . Try changing Workbench colours, editing icons (use IE - see below - rather than the supplied IconEd).

10. SUGGESTED PD PROGRAMS:

CAUSE Beginner's Disks, CAUSE Games Disks.

AQUARIUM, obtainable from the CAUSE PD Librarians, is great for easily finding stuff on FISH disks (which form an excellent PD collection compiled by a bloke called Fred Fish).

IE icon editor, on CAUSE Beginner's Disk 3, allows you to edit icons (change colours, draw new pictures etc) which can be fun.

DIRECTORY OPUS is a great directory utility, and a demo version of this is on CAUSE Beginner's Disk 2. Another good directory utility is SID, on Fish 338, but this requires some knowledge to be able to install it so it isn't suitable for the absolute beginner.

DISKSALV, on CAUSE Beginner's Disk 3 or Fish 251, can be used not only to recover data from any dicky disks, but also to recover files you accidentally delete (as long as you do NOT write on the disk again before running DiskSalv)

. TEXTPLUS text processor on CAUSE Beginner's Disk 1 is regarded well, as is the QED text processor on Amigan 23 (Berenice Jacobs has Amigans).

SNOWFALL, on Fish 303, is simply a picture of snow falling on the Amiga logo; it looks best after running for, say,

20 minutes in a darkened room. (You can substitute your own picture for the logo.) I love it.

MANDEL MOUNTAINS, on Fish 383, has some wonderful Mandelbrot and Julia pictures. Even if you aren't into maths, these pictures are wows. Just double-click on a picture icon to display its beauty.

11. FINALLY (Finally!)

Well, I hope you have as much fun with your Amiga as I'm having with mine. It's a GREAT machine. Happy Amiga computing.

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of BECAUS for 1992. It was unfortunate that we had to skip an issue, but due to both time and financial constraints, an open letter to members served the purpose better.

You may have noticed that the long standing acronym for our society has been changed so that we now are rid of the extraneous E. Members have raised this issue on numerous occasions and when put to the committee it was voted out. With this issue we also bid farewell to our Director, Jeff Wilson. I'm sure we all appreciate Jeff's contribution to the club and his active role in organising club activities. Good luck Jeff!

I'm pleased to say that the Newsletter is starting the year strongly, with plenty of excellent contributions from members. It's good to see a range of articles catering for different expertise levels, especially beginners. My thanks to all contributors.

February Demo Evening

Upcoming events to be aware of include an Special Interest Group open night for the February meeting and the Annual General Meeting in April. The idea for the February meeting is to have demonstrations and displays whereby people with an interest or skill in specific areas showcase their work

Classifieds

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Fred Pollum ph 281 0842	

and/or techniques. You don't have to have created something - if you're familiar with a package, be it database, graphics or utility software, then you're encouraged to come along and participate. Essentially, this meeting introduces new users (and new CAUS members) to the exciting possibilities that an Amiga offers to its owner. If you'd like to set-up at this evening just bring along your equipment on the night, or for more information contact one of the committee members, listed on page 3.

SIG Updates

A couple of new SIGs have emerged - the Geneology SIG has been picked up by Loy Winkler and Mathew Taylor is looking for people interested in starting a Music & Graphics SIG, see his column on page 14. Also, note the phone number change for the AMOS SIG co-ordinator. The Can Do SIG has been picked up by Andrew Boundy, see the SIG list on page 3. Finally, the Hardware SIG will not be meeting on the first Thursday of February, give Chris Cole a call on 247 8590 to confirm the date. All SIG co-ordinators are listed on page 3 along with contact numbers.

Mark Trenergy 286 1358

Editor

Members' Discount

CAUS members can now obtain a discount of 5% on Amiga products at all Grace Bros. stores.